

**Testimony of Pamela Steinmetz
Before the Appropriations Committee Regarding
An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations
March 6, 2015**

Good day Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and members of the committee.

My name is Pamela Steinmetz and I am a registered voter in the town of Preston.

I am writing this today to testify on the Governor's Budget Recommendations for the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

I am strongly opposing the proposed elimination of funding to Connecticut's five Regional Mental Health Boards, including the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board that serves my town.

As an employee of Reliance House, a local non-profit for dual diagnosed members, I have seen the benefit and positive end results due to the oversight of the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board.

Our membership is sometimes the forgotten ones. Keeping DMHAS dollars flowing enable us to provide much needed services, which are not offered elsewhere.

Within my eight years of experience in the field – I have seen the struggle and the triumph of our membership. Largely due to what we could offer them in way of support. Cutting funding would only lead to increased struggle and failure.

Supportive housing and funding is badly needed with fewer and fewer shelter's available. There is a large majority that would return to the streets if funding along with services is cut.

On a personal note, I too have gained a lot of insight, direction and input from The Eastern Regional Mental Health Board. Combining their knowledge and help with my own experience and training. Working together we make a "whole village" to serve those who need us. "There for the grace of God go I"

Please continue to fund Connecticut's five regional Mental Health Boards at their current levels, and preserve the Citizen's Voice in Mental Health Policy.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

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